

**EDGEFIELD COUNTY COUNCIL REGULAR MEETING  
MINUTES  
July 6, 2010**

The Edgefield County Council held its regular meeting at 6:00 P. M. Tuesday, July 6, 2010, in the County Council Chambers, 225 Jeter Street, Edgefield.

**Members present**

C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman  
Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman  
Rodney Ashcraft, Councilman  
Genia Blackwell, Councilwoman  
Norman Dorn, Councilman

**Others present**

Alton Brown, County Administrator  
Michael S. Medlock, County Attorney  
Lynn Strom, Finance Director  
Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council  
and others as per list attached

Chairman Kneece called the meeting to order and Attorney Medlock gave the invocation, after which the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Approval of Minutes**

The June 1, 2010 Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Edgefield County Council were approved with a motion made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell. The motion carried unanimously.

**Reports**

No comments.

**Executive Session**

The item scheduled for executive session was moved to open session. The item to be considered was the hiring of a seasonal worker for the Edgefield County Recreation Park. The administrator recommended that the position of the seasonal worker be given to Nick Waters until someone can be hired to fill that position (March-October) \$125 per week to compensate him for this responsibility. The salary would be one-half of the budgeted amount for a seasonal worker. The compensation would cease when someone is hired for that particular position. Mr. Waters has been filling the position since March 1 and the administrator stated that it could be

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retroactive. **Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Chairman Kneece. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Old Business**

Third reading of Ordinance No. 09-10-623, “An Ordinance Amending the Procedures to be Followed by the Edgefield County Board of Assessment Appeals to Specify that the Board Shall Follow Those Procedures Set Forth in Section 12-60-2530, SC Code of Laws (1976), As Amended.” **Motion was made by Councilwoman Blackwell, seconded by Chairman Kneece, to approve the third reading of Ordinance No. 09-10-623. Motion carried unanimously.**

Third reading of Ordinance No. 09-10-624, “An Ordinance Amending the Edgefield County Land Development and Zoning Regulations to Create a Special Development District Entitled “Planned Development District” to Provide a Mechanism for the Planning Commission, County Council and an Applicant to Agree on the Scope of a Proposed Development.”

The ordinance was amended after second reading. The amendment was included for third reading

Mr. Reed was asked to explain the amendment. A brief summary: changing the word “lot” to “parcel” as far as minimum sizes – clarified some of the requirements that need to be on the submitted plat and added a paragraph toward the end asking for the developers impact analysis on county provided services: fire, ambulance and police protection

Attorney Medlock also added a change submitted by Councilwoman Blackwell requiring both Planning Commission and County Council to hold public hearings. (e-1, page 3, last sentence) “The applicant shall submit the request to the Planning Commission for review, public hearing and recommendation to the county council for further public hearing and final action.”

**There was no motion to approve third reading. The ordinance will be taken back to the Planning Commission for consideration.**

Second reading of Ordinance No. 09-10-625, “An Ordinance Defining the Method to Elect Edgefield County Council Officers and to Codify the Existing Council Practice and to Clarify Other Issues.” Mr. Medlock explained this ordinance does not change anything from the previous ordinance, it is the same. This only states the method of how the

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chairman and vice chairman are elected – the existing procedure for electing the two officers is now in the ordinance.

**Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilman Dorn to approve Ordinance No. 09-10-625. Motion carried unanimously.**

**New Business  
Ordinances**

**First reading of Ordinance No. 10-11-626, “An Ordinance Establishing a Business License Requirement and Fee To Be Imposed On All Businesses Operating In The Unincorporated Areas Of Edgefield County.”**

Administrator: This ordinance has the potential per our estimate, would the first full year generate \$100,000 for the county. We think that is significant. It is not a tax, it is a regulatory fee. We could not levy a tax because that would be under the cap that we are working under now. As we get into this, we will work more on the method that is used to determine how businesses will look at and see what their taxes will be.

The majority of the counties do not have a business license ordinance and we would like to be on the leading edge and adopt it while we are small so that we can grow with it. This is a good revenue and one of the few things we can do without violating the tax cap.

The question was asked as to who would enforce this ordinance. The administrator stated that if council would notice the ordinance does not have an effective date until April 1, 2011. That gives us plenty of time to hold three readings and a public hearing. There is nowhere in the ordinance that levies the responsibility. Several elected officials have offered to help us through the process. If it (ordinance) is approved and approved in this format, then we will start levying responsibilities. Who will enforce it? I would like by that time to have a *Code Enforcement Officer* appointed. Even though we do have one now, those duties are now in the Building Inspection Department only and that would be part of that person’s duties.

Recommendation was made by Councilman Ashcraft to accept this as information since we do have a while. Mr. Ashcraft stated he would like “it in my hands a little further before first reading”.

The administrator stated that is suitable to us. Mr. Brown said he is aware that it is a little bit complicated and I am aware of the amount of misinformation that has already disseminated. I am also aware that there is no mechanism for alerting the council

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members of an existing proposed ordinance prior to delivering the ordinance in advance of first reading. My suggestion is take the ordinance – you know I look back and I think about the conflict we have had over the Calliham building, of what we are going to call Mr. Reed, what his title is and other things that don't amount to a hill of beans in my mine.

This does amount to a hill of beans – it will be a revenue producer for years and when the council is ready to come back and let the staff know, you are ready to undertake this we will be more than ready to work with you and answer any questions you have and make any amendments you see fit.

**Motion was made by Councilman Ashcraft, seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell and the motion carried unanimously to review and bring back to council.**

**First reading of Ordinance No. 10-11-627, “An Ordinance to Provide for the Franchising Procedures and Standards for Private Ambulance Services in Edgefield County” was approved with a motion made by Councilwoman Blackwell, seconded by Councilman Bright. Motion carried unanimously.**

First reading of Ordinance No. 10-11-628, “An Ordinance Implementing a County-Owned or Leased Non-Law Enforcement Vehicle Usage Policy”.

**Motion was made by Councilman Bright, seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell to approve first reading of Ordinance No. 10-11-618. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Resolutions**

Rick Green with Upper Savannah COG explained Resolution No. 10-11-321, “A Resolution Adopting the Edgefield County Hazard Mitigation Plan” that was before council for consideration of approval. This an updated *Plan* that was adopted by the county five years ago. FEMA asked that all counties have this *Plan*. If a county has adopted the plan, it makes the county eligible for grant funding – does not guarantee you will receive the funds, just eligible to apply. This *Plan* pertains to natural disasters.

**Motion was made by Chairman Kneece, seconded by Councilman Bright, to approve Resolution No. 10-11-211. Motion carried unanimously.**

Resolution No.10-11-322, “A Resolution Authorizing the County Administrator to Request Removal of Railroad Street from State Highway System” was moved to Item XI of the agenda to be included in discussion along with the Calliham Building renovation.

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Resolution No.10-11-323, “A Resolution Authorizing the Edgefield County EMS to Enter into a Mutual Aid Agreement with Aiken County Rescue”.

**Consideration of Resolution No. 10-11-323 postponed to be brought to council at the August meeting.**

**Ambulance purchase**

The administrator explained that unit 62 has been de-commissioned because of some problems. The EMS staff is pursuing several options to replace that vehicle. McCormick County is helping us out by being on stand-by if existing units are out of the county. We are working on potential mutual aid agreements with abutting counties and negotiating a contract with a private ambulance service.

We are also applying to FEMA for a grant to replace the ambulance and the EMS staff is holding some fundraisers. The matter at hand though is the purchase of a used vehicle and in the absence of the EMS Director Raymond Batchlor addressed council concerning the possible purchase of an ambulance from Fairfield County.

“Fairfield County has a 2001 International Heavy Duty Freightliner with a Wheel Coach Box / mileage 266,000. There are repairs at an estimate of \$3600. The total purchase price and repairs is \$6,599.19. Raymond stated they had spoken with Freightliner that with no major problems the county should get at least 350,000 to 400,000 miles out of the ambulance.”

The administrator informed council the ambulance does have a 500,000-mile power **train** warranty.

**Motion was made by Chairman Kneece, seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell, to purchase the 2001 Freightliner ambulance from Fairfield County for a total cost of \$6,599.19. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Ninety-Six District RC&D**

Ms. Elyse Benson addressed council concerning the appointment of three individuals from Edgefield County to serve on the RC&D Board. Chairman Kneece stated this would be looked into and brought back before council.

**Census update**

Ms. Doris Jones was present to give an update on the **2010 Census. South Carolina** was at rated at the top and Edgefield County was among the highest participants.

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Mrs. Gloria Bynum was on the agenda to address council but was not present.

**Bettis Park**

Mrs. Betty Butler addressed council and thanked them for all they have done and do at the Edgefield County Recreation Park. She stated she had come before council last year before the new budget and talked about a kiddie land at the park, and she understood that finances would be discussed during budget time for a kiddie land. She does understand the budget cuts but she hopes the playground will not be completely forgotten. Mrs. Butler wondered if any of the monies taken in during games were earmarked for a kiddie land.

The administrator said that he was under the impression that at a council meeting (maybe May) when Rev. Pope was present airing his concerns about the park, the concession stand, it was resolved that the profits that came from the concession stand were going into an account to be put aside for playground equipment at the park.

**Board appointments**

**Zoning Board of Appeals**

**Motion was made by Chairman Kneece, seconded by Councilwoman Blackwell, to appoint Jim McCord to serve another three-year term on the Edgefield County Zoning Board of Appeals. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Library Board**

**Motion was made by Chairman Kneece, seconded by Councilman Dorn, to appoint Mrs. Betty Butler to serve a four-year term on the Edgefield County Library Board. Mrs. Butler replaces Mrs. Virginia Weaver whose term expired in 2009. Motion carried unanimously.**

**Guests**

Mr. Art Biggs asked council if any consideration had been given to his previous suggestion that leased property be deeded to the county and the administrator stated “no”.

After very much discussion between Mr. Biggs and the council concerning county recreation, he (Biggs) was informed of the Recreation Commission, Recreation Director, to whom he should speak with on recreation issues that he had. Mr. Biggs was not aware of the commission or the director that is the reason he came before council.

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**Calliham Building Renovation**

Mike Reed, Building Official, brought before council the floor plan, the request for bids, bid proposals, and a financial statement. There were no questions on the financial statement.

**Motion was made by Councilman Dorn, seconded by Councilman Bright to approve the following bids. Motion carried unanimously.**

(\$32,000) of Custom Wall, Inc for the installation of partition walls and suspended ceiling

(\$12,718) of Yohe Plumbing of Aiken for the plumbing installation

There was only one bid received for the security of the building: Southern Burglary & Fire Alarm (\$1,775). This would be for smoke detectors in the hallway and throughout the building. Consensus of council was re-bid for the security.

**Motion was made by Chairman Kneece, seconded by Councilman Dorn, to approve Resolution No. 10-11-322 “A Resolution Authorizing the County Administrator to Request Removal of Railroad Street from State Highway System”, authorizing the administrator to complete and submit the SC Department of Transportation a “Request for Removal of Railroad Street from the State Highway System. Motion carried unanimously.**

Before the agenda item of the Calliham Building was brought to the floor Administrator Brown asked for about ten minutes to go over some things that he hopes will expedite not only this item but expedite the project itself

**Brown:** Councilman Ashcraft sent a questionnaire out to me sometime last week and I was not diligent in getting it back to him because I had computer problems and then we had the holiday. I would like to take an opportunity to go over these questions for a number of reasons.

(1) I think anytime anybody on the council sends out a questionnaire, as I told you in my interview, I think it is important that those responses go back to everybody.

(2) Some of the questions that I answered I told Rodney that I thought these were discussion questions and I would like to take that opportunity now.

And, hopefully, when I get through here and feel free anybody on the council to interrupt me and ask questions. Maybe we can all be on the same page, move forward and get this renovation under way. You will know how the staff feels what our understanding is of the

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project and hopefully it will be to the point where we can move on and not get bogged down on some of the questions that I consider petty.

(1) Is it legal for Mr. Reed to acquire bids before or after the County Council had voted to do so?

The legality is not something, as I told him, that I am not totally qualified to rule on but I would give him my opinion. I broke this question down and prefaced this particular question as follows...

(a) In regards to your question, I have no knowledge of any law or code having been broken. If I had been aware of such an event, I would have intervened and informed the Council immediately.

So I broke this down

(b) Is it legal for Mr. Reed to acquire bids before the County Council had voted for Mr. Reed to acquire bids? Remember his question was to acquire bids before or after?

This is a discussion question, which will probably be resolved based on communication and semantics.

Now listen carefully to this.

The Staff often receives mixed signals from the Council. Often times everyone talks at once, talks among themselves and seldom speaks into the microphones. Barbara, Lynn, Michael and I have had “morning after” meetings to try to interpret what was said and what if any our instructions were.

The Council has adopted Robert’s Rules of Order, Article VIII, Vote; Section 46, Voting; Section, General Consent, which states the Chair, may take action under the rule of General, Unanimous or Silent Consent.

This means (paraphrased) that the Chair may assume general or unanimous consent of a decision, directive, etc by the Council’s silence or lack of a timely objection. The theory behind this authority is that the Chair can expedite business by avoiding the formality of motions and voting on business and questions where there is no disagreement.



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It does not necessarily mean that every council member is in favor of the motion or the decision but that knowing it is useless to oppose it or even to discuss it, the opposition simply acquiesces in the informality.

The Staff hearing such decision, directive, etc without an objection assumes a unanimous consent and implements what it understands to be the Council's instructions.

So, if the chairman says, "Alton, do this, and nobody objects and the remaining council is silent, we assume that is a directive of the council. O.K.?"

(c) Is it legal for Mr. Reed to acquire bids after the County Council had voted to do so?

After - Obviously, yes.

(2) Is it legal for Mr. Reed to direct sub-contractors to perform work on the new county govt. offices before or after the County Council has voted on it if those bids exceed a certain amount of money?

Again, this is a before/after. My disclaimer was

(a) Regarding this question, I have no knowledge of any law or code having been violated. If so, I would have intervened and informed the Council immediately.

Now again semantics.

A contractor and this is from the SC Statues.

(b) Contractor means any person having a contract with a governmental body.

Subcontractor means any person having a contract to perform work or render service to a contractor as a part of the contractor's agreement with a governmental body.

The Council decided to forego the hiring of a contractor to save money.

(c) Is it legal for Mr. Reed to direct sub-contractors to perform work on the new county govt. offices before the County Council has voted on it if those bids exceed a certain amount of money?

Sub-contractors have not performed any work at the Calliham renovation unless the work was preformed for the roofer. The council did vote on approving the bid for the roofer and at that time I do not recall any discussion about what Mr.

Reed's title was, if he was qualified, if there had been any vote or whatever. The council simply approved it and we went on.

(d) Is it legal for Mr. Reed to direct sub-contractors to perform work on the new county govt. offices after the County Council has voted on it if those bids exceed a certain amount of money?

Mr. Reed will direct his comments to those individuals with whom the County has a contractual relationship.

(3) What parties have given legal opinion on the practice of this project being inspected by a qualified inspector in the adjacent county of Aiken County and the work being sub-contracted by our Building Official?

(a) What parties have given "legal opinion" on the practice of this project being inspected by a qualified inspector in the adjacent county of Aiken County?

Notice I have broken this down into two different questions

None, to my knowledge.

What parties have given "legal" opinion on the practice of this project being sub-contracted by our Building Official?

None, to my knowledge.

(b) And none is necessary. However, it is "good business" to avoid the perception of impropriety by avoiding having one entity inspect its own work as suggested by Section 6-9-20 of the SC Code which is titled (Agreements with other governmental entities for provision of services required by this chapter), which states:

Municipalities and counties may establish agreements with other governmental entities of the State to issue permits and enforce building codes in order to provide the services required by this chapter. The South Carolina Building Codes Council (council) may assist in arranging for municipalities, counties or consultants to provide the services required by this chapter to other municipalities or counties if a written request from the governing body of the municipality or county is submitted to the council.

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() Lastly, Guy Mueller, is the Edgefield County Building Inspector and is not involved in the bidding and contracting.

(4) Technically, will the work of each contractor that is inspected by this outside party and not that of our building official?

Absolutely, yes.

(5) Was it “Required” by law that an outside inspector assures the quality of the subs on this project?

I have no knowledge of any law or code that requires that an outside building inspector assure the quality of the sub-contractors.

Generally speaking, it is the responsibility of the contractor or in the absence of a contractor, the owner to verify the quality of a sub-contractor through reference checks, etc.

(6) Does the outside inspector work for Aiken County or the City of N. Augusta?

We are working with North Augusta. We have no agreement at this time. And, if I were North Augusta and I happened to pick up the paper and read all of the stuff that is going on I would tell Edgefield County that I don’t have time to do it. I would not want to get involved in this, but it is North Augusta that we are working with.

(7) Would it be beneficial to refer to Mike Reed by another title such as “project manager” rather than General Contractor to take away any appearances that he is personally benefiting from this project?

The use of the term “personally benefitting” is quite interesting. And I asked Rodney if he were individually or in conjunction with any other members of the council conducting an investigation?

I am going to tie this together later on. And the reason I asked that question is because of SECTION 4-9-660 of the SC Code which says Authority of council and its members over county officers and employees.

Except for the purposes of inquiries and investigations, the council shall deal with county officers and employees who are subject to the direction and supervision of the county administrator solely through the administrator and neither the council nor its members shall give orders or instructions to any such officers or employees.

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It is a fact that On June 25, 2010, did you not question Mr. Reed regarding receiving kickbacks from contractors on the project? You left out “from contractors” on tape. An action, which I consider offensive and an action, which I consider an investigation.

Also, Mr. Reed’s Job Title is Building and Planning Director and the last statement in his job description is “Performs other related work as required”. In my mind, this suffices. So, I think we should stop talking about whatever his job title is. His job title is Building and Planning Director and we do not have to worry about if he is Project Manager, Construction Manager, whatever.

**Ashcraft:** Mr. Brown, you mentioned something about kickbacks. You mentioned Mr. Reed’s name twice. Can you restate that sentence?

**Brown:** On June 25, 2010, did you not question Mr. Reed regarding receiving kickbacks from contractors on the project?

**Ashcraft:** No.

(8) It has been mentioned that it is illegal for any county employee to hold more than one position for the county.

I have no knowledge of any law or code prohibiting such activities. Had I been aware of any such prohibition, I would have so informed the Council.

Is it true that Mike Reed does so as he holds a position as (1) “Edgefield County Building Inspector” and (2) works in the capacity of “Tax Assessor?”

No, to each.

(9) Now that he is working on the new building and since he does not receive compensation from the county under a separate title, can this be considered a conflict of interest?

No.

(10) What laws have been broken thus far regarding this process if the council was allegedly “polled” but plans to vote on these items at the next meeting?

I am not aware of any “polling” in regards to “this process”.

(11) Is Mr. Reed required by law to consult the council before he acquires bids for any project?

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I know of no law or code governing your question.

(12) If the council decides not to use plan “E” then the county will have wasted the time of the contractors who will have given bids on this project. If we were supposed to vote on plans A, B, or C then would not it make sense that we vote on plan E that is being put out for bids?

It is not within my purview to speculate on what “ifs” regarding Council actions.

(13) Can Chairman Kneece or Administrator Brown solely make decisions such as making Mike Reed the “Project Manager” without taking a vote from the council?

Part A is a discussion question (which we have already covered) and the answer to Part B is no, the Council did not give me and I did not assume that responsibility.

(14) What, during this process is not the “Business” of the citizens of Edgefield County?

In order to prepare a proper response, I would need to know the context of the quote “Business”.

If this does not answer a lot of questions regarding what we are doing here, I will be glad to try to answer any others. Let’s get down to the business at hand and get this renovation going and let’s not worry about “whose title is what, who’s in a conflict of interest because they hold two jobs.” Let’s try to get this thing wrapped up as quick as possible and as sufficiently as possible. If you have any questions for me regarding these questions or responses, I will be more than happy to try to answer them, now or later.

**Dorn:** How did “kickbacks “get in the conversation and then all of a sudden get out of the conversation?

**Brown:** Well, it was in twice: first in the Daily Edge.<sup>(1)</sup> He quoted that Mr. Reed and then <sup>(2)</sup> Rodney questioned him on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

**Administrators Post:**

<sup>(1)</sup>The Edgefield Daily  
Opinion - A Column by the Editor  
Problems Mount in Calliham Building Project  
June 25, 2010

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Is there any end to the convoluted way the majority of the Edgefield County Council and the County Government conducts itself? Since the entire fiasco surrounding the drawn out tax liens, tax sales, foreclosure, and purchase of the Calliham building that took years to complete, and being voted down many more times than it was approved, more problems rise to the surface - much to the chagrin of some elected officials.

The most recent problems revolve around a supposed “agreement” of the Edgefield County Council members to place Building and Planning Director Mike Reed over the interior demolition of one section of the building and to act as the general contractor for the remodeling of the building for county offices.

County Council Vice-Chairman Willie Bright said that it was his understanding that the members of the council were “polled” to approve the appointment. But polling the council members in order to take an action is a violation of the “sunshine” laws. So, that could not have taken place.

County Council Chairman Monroe Kneece states that the entire council “agreed” to tap Reed for the job, but he can’t remember when that was done and is not sure if it took place during a public meeting of the elected body. To put your mind at ease, it never happened.

Aside from the obvious problems with these scenarios, three members of council state publicly that no vote by the council ever took place to appoint Reed. Moreover, no vote was taken, or even discussed in public, that Reed was allowed to place an estimated \$600,000 worth of work to be advertised for bids.

So how, with no public votes, no public discussion, has this project been allowed to move forward? County Council Chairman Monroe Kneece has been quoted as saying that it was none of the public’s business.

Really?

Our county council is spending hundreds of thousands of tax dollars on county owned property and how it is done is none of our business?

Chairman Kneece stated that “the State” had granted approval for Building Director Mike Reed to act as the general contractor for the project (that has never been voted on or approved). Kneece never identified what “state” department gave the approval.

However, according to the South Carolina Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation:

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No registered building code enforcement officer or contract inspector may be subject to personal gain by means of a fee, wage, commission, barter or any other form of compensation in currency, goods or services, in exchange for the furnishing of provide or offer to provide labor, material, appliances, equipment, plans, specifications, consultation or any services related to the construction, alteration, demolition or maintenance of any building or structure within the local jurisdiction for which employed.

No registered building code enforcement officer or contract inspector may engage in any work that conflicts or is perceived to conflict with his/her prescribed duties or the interest of the local jurisdiction for which employed.

The entire regulation reads, Section 165 - Conflict of Interest ([Hyperlink](#))

**Administrators Note:**

(1) First, the term personal gain when used in this contest is understood by most people reading the Editor's Opinion to mean an act of fraud, deception or false deeds for the purpose of obtaining money, property or other assets by deception or to take illicit or unfair advantage of an office or position of trust for the purpose of obtaining money, property or other assets by deception.

(2) Second, If you click on the [Hyperlink](#):, the Code has been altered to read as follows:

No registered building code enforcement officer or contract inspector may provide or offer to provide labor, material, appliances, equipment, plans, specifications, consultation or any services related to the construction, alteration, demolition or maintenance of any building or structure within the local jurisdiction for which employed.

No registered building code enforcement officer or contract inspector may engage in any work that conflicts or is perceived to conflict with his/her prescribed duties or the interest of the local jurisdiction for which employed.

The following titles do not exist in the South Carolina Code:

- Building Code Enforcement Officer
- Contract Inspector
- Registered Building Code Enforcement Officer

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- Registrant

<sup>(2)</sup>FROM: MIKE REED  
TO: ALTON BROWN  
DATE: JUN 25 2010 - 12:36 PM  
SUBJECTS: KICKBACKS

As I mentioned to you this morning, last Monday around lunchtime I meet with Rodney Ashcraft at Penn St. renovation project to provide him with information on my construction background and to brief him on the status of the project. During our conversation, he mentioned that others had questions my involvement in the project and questioned if I was getting kickbacks from contractors on the project. I have never taken kickbacks or profited in any illegal or unethical manner on any of my projects working in the private sector or on any of my jobs working for local governments.

**Ashcraft:** I do not ever recall questioning Mr. Reed if he is receiving kickbacks. If anything, maybe he brought it up and said he was not receiving them, but no, I do not recall asking.

**Dorn:** Sounds illegal to me.

Mike Reed approaches podium.

**Brown:** Mike, you do not have to defend yourself, you can set down if you choose.

**Reed:** There was a statement made you said, "Well, some people have questioned me if you were getting kickbacks. " You brought it up to me that some people had questioned you if I was getting kickbacks." "Right." "I was explaining my involvement in the project "right" and that I am not getting anything just satisfaction seeing the project done. And that was it. And that is where some people say I am getting kickbacks and questioned you. "Right."

**Ashcraft:** I apologize. I do not recall that whatsoever but I cannot recall that whatsoever.

(Could not understand Mike at this point.)

**Blackwell:** Mr. Reed, I do not think there is any question of your integrity – I think you are an outstanding person and I think you are very honest. My concern is your overload. How much can you take on and do within a thirty five-forty hour workweek before it breaks you.



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This project should not have gone on as long as it has. I think there a lot of in between time when we did not have an administrator and we had an administrator but a lot of the decisions were not being made. The project has gone on longer than it should have. It is not a big project just a matter of building and planning just trying to get approval on everything and getting everybody on the same page to say o.k. let's do this –

**Kneece:** Mike, let me put my two-cents worth in here-might come out to be five dollars before it is over with. There are too many people trying to kill this project from the word go. You have nothing to do with just a little bit of – go back and do a little work here and a little work there you can do on a 4,000 square foot. You could build a Taj Mahal with everything that is being done to kill this project. My thing is, Rodney, let's get on with the thing if you want to do it and if you do not want to do it, step aside. Roy, you go and tend to your business and write your paper and let county council do what they got to do. I know you are not in favor of it, just step aside and stay out of it. If you have a question ask it, but don't go inventing questions. Mike, you are an employee of Edgefield County, you are doing a wonderful job, you have a little job here they are making a mountain out of a molehill.

**Bright:** Mike, I appreciate what you are doing and I really thank you. I apologize for council because one of the worst things you can be called is a thief and I just don't like that.

**Kneece:** Everybody knows you are not. That's pretty poor and I don't think a man should call a man a thief unless he can prove it.

**Ashcraft:** Mr. Bright, are you accusing me of calling Mr. Reed a thief?

**Bright:** What is the difference if you are getting kickbacks?

**Ashcraft:** Mr. Kneece, give me a second here. I seem to be the sacrificial lamb this evening. Those questions, a few of them came from me, but a lot of them came from people in the community. Now, if I am going to be accused and sacrificed tonight for asking those questions, then I will be accused and sacrificed every night. Mr. Reed, I apologize if you misunderstood anything I said, but I do not ever recall saying that statement. Now, you do what you need to do and I am amazed that that would even be brought up but I've no idea why it would be brought up.

**Reed:** I did not say that you said it as far as you accusing me but what was said was that you had heard people questioning me.

**Ashcraft:** "O.K."

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**Reed:** That its. That's what you said. What you're getting out of it, some people thought that you were having kickbacks. I did not mean to say that you accused me.

**Ashcraft:** I don't even recall saying that but all of sudden what you are telling me is different from what is coming from both sides of me which is I am being accused of calling you a thief. But that is not the case at all. Like I say, if I am going to ask questions that my constituents have and I am going to be in trouble for it, I will be in trouble every thirty days. So, I appreciate the job everybody on this council is doing except I would like to say, Mr. Bright please don't accuse me of what you did. Thank you.

**Brown:** Yes Mr. Chairman. It is with some sadness that I make the following comments but they must be made.

We have heard a lot of comments just recently about hostile work environments. For those of you who may not know, a hostile work environment describes a work place situation for employees where employees cannot reasonably perform their work due to actions by management or others with the knowledge and support of management, which is deemed hostile.

Hostile, in this form, is a legal setting when management takes action against an employee or employees by creating an environment, which causes severe stress to the employee, or employees. Specifically in this case, the Daily Editor has publicly alleged corruption and receiving kickbacks on the part of employees by name without offering any documentation. Further, there exists a spousal relationship between the editor and a council member, which implies a strong complicity between the two and the editor's comments as suggested by:

(1) The editor's 6/20/10 comment addressed to employees in the administration building "Genia is out of the country so I can write anything I want, followed by

(2) the editor's comments of the editor's June 23, 2010 post "Alton, the honeymoon is over, step up to the plate or be relegated as one of the water bearers of the past who have been run out of the job. There may be more than one seat challenged in November and your job might just hang in the balance on the outcome. And I assume that those three votes that you have talked about would be Genia, Rodney and Dean.

So, therefore, Teresa and I are making our contingency plans to do something else. It is with great sorrow but I cannot sit here and wait for that to come about, but I am not resigning. I am just telling you that is the way I feel.

Unfortunately, when it comes to the rules of a hostile working environment you cannot file a claim in the singular or in the minority but you must file against the supervisor or,

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in this case, the council, so the first step in filing such a claim is notifying the supervisor. So please, council consider this such notification.

Mr. Chairman, let's put the horse in the barn.

**Administrators Post:**

The Edgefield Daily  
Editor's Post:  
June 23, 2010

If I hear another "that's the way we've always done it" or "I don't know" from our tenured county council members I think I will throw up.

Can anyone in the county government take responsibility for what goes on? Anybody, somebody?

In my heart I believe it is not a question of whether or not there is corruption in our local government, but rather a matter of whether or not our "tenured leaders" can even spell "corruption" much less define it. In addition, where is County Administrator Alton Brown in all of this? Why the closed doors and refusal to meet with the press?

I realize the Citizen News and the Edgefield Advertiser are not going to ask the hard questions and that is to be expected, but why hide from Edgefield Daily when the fecal matter hits the fan?

If there is nothing to hide, why hide?

It is time County Administrator Alton Brown goes on the record on the hard questions on county matters. The honeymoon is over. Step up to the plate or be relegated as one of the water bearers of the past who have been run out of the job for doing the same thing.

There may be more than one seat challenged in November and his job might just hang on the outcome, as well as the county attorney Michael Medlock. The single seat up for grabs in November could send a shockwave through the county government, even more if two seats are overturned.

**After remarks by the administrator the meeting adjourned with the motion made by Councilman Dorn.**

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C. Monroe Kneece, Chairman

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Willie C. Bright, Vice Chairman

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Rodney Ashcraft, Councilman

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Regenia Blackwell, Councilwoman

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Norman Dorn, Councilman

**ATTEST**

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Barbara R. Stark, Clerk to Council

